



EGN

Erie Gay News



Governor Tom Wolf addresses the Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs at their November 20 quarterly meeting via Zoom. See page 4.

PA LGBTQ Townhall on December 9

from Pennsylvania Commission on LGTBQ Affairs

The Pennsylvania Commission on LGBT Affairs will host a Pennsylvania LGBTQ Town Hall on Wednesday, December 9 from 6 to 7:30 PM on Facebook Live. Join us and speak on issues affecting you and the LGBTQ+ community. Visit facebook.com/PACLGBTQ to join via Facebook Live. Speakers required to register by December 7 by December 7 at <https://forms.gle/1QBxkS1gikzR8ZEA8>

World AIDS Day on December 1

from Erie County HIV Task Force

This year, the Erie County HIV Task Force will not be hosting an in-person gathering for World AIDS Day. As *Erie Gay News* goes to press, there had been requests for organizations to submit videos to be posted for World AIDS Day on December 1. If we receive any, they will be posted to EGN's web site at www.eriegaynews.com.

Erie Gay News encourages everyone to be tested for HIV. There are several sites in Erie that offer free and confidential HIV testing. All providers in the area are currently using rapid testing, which gives results in two minutes!

Sites where you can get your free and confidential testing include:

Adagio Health Erie, 3530 Peach Street, Suite 120, Erie, PA 16508, (814) 453-4718. Monday through Thursday 8-430pm (telehealth Monday-Friday). STI testing including Rapid Hep C and HIV

Adagio Health Edinboro, 118 East Plum Street, Edinboro, PA 16412. (814) 734-7600. Monday through Thursday 8-430pm (telehealth Monday-Friday). STI testing including Rapid Hep C and HIV

Central Outreach Erie, 3104 State Street, Erie, Pa. 16508, (814) 619-4009, M 11-7, T-Th 9-5, F 12-5. Free HIV testing, free STD testing. Free Hep C testing and the cure. PrEP, hormone replacement therapy, addiction and recovery resources. homeless outreach

Community Health Net, 1202 State St, Erie Pa, 16501, (814) 454-4530. 8 am to 5pm Monday through Friday. We provided testing and condom distribution of male/female condoms and dental dams.

Northwest Alliance, 1001 State Street, Suite 606, Erie, PA 16501, (814) 454-3811. Hours: M-F, 8:30-4:30, 2 minute rapid HIV testing; rapid Hep C testing. Walk in or call for an appointment

Hate Crimes Reporting

by Michael Mahler

Currently, Pennsylvania's hate crimes law do not cover sexual orientation nor gender identity/expression as protected categories. The City of Erie's Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Municipal Equality Index (MEI) is calculated on the basis of accurate reporting of hate crimes for those categories as well. One of the barriers to passing LGBTQIA+ inclusive hate crime legislation is that many legislators believe that it is not a problem.

If you believe that you may have been the victim of a hate crime, which can include both actual

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Erie Gay News
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The *Erie Gay News* is published monthly as a source of news, events, information, and support for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender people (GLBTs), their families, friends, and supporters in the Erie PA area.

We welcome and encourage all readers to submit timely news, comments, and opinions of interest to local GLBTs for publication in these pages. Please include your contact information with any piece you submit.



QUARTER PAGE	FULL PAGE	HALF PAGE VERTICAL
HALF PAGE HORIZONTAL	EIGHTH PAGE	

AD SIZE	PRICE/ISSUE	DIMENSIONS
EIGHTH	\$40 - \$36 Prepaid	1 5/8" high X 2 7/8" wide
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To Lake Erie Counseling Associates for hosting! Andrea Shaffer, Audrey, Jeff Hill, Jewels Frantz, Johauna, Kim Conti, Linda Thomas, and Rex Apps for folding; Jewels Frantz, Johauna, Kim Conti, and Rex Apps for distribution; Mike Lipiec for ad layout & etc. If you're interested in helping out, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com.

Community News

or threatened violence/harm, please contact Erie City Police at either 911 (if it is currently an emergency situation) or (814) 870-1125 (if it is not an emergency situation/after the fact.) It is important to report the incident as soon as you can.

Additionally, please also contact the PA Human Relations Commission at 717-772-0523. Info about how to file a complaint with the PA HRC is at <https://www.phrc.pa.gov/File-A-Complaint/Pages/About-Filing-A-Complaint.aspx>

It is okay if you are not sure whether something was a hate crime or not. It is part of law enforcement's job to make that determination, and it is better to speak directly with law enforcement and help them perform their duty.

NW PA Pride Alliance thanks Donors and Supporters

2020 was certainly a challenging year. NW PA Pride Alliance is grateful for wonderful donors and supporters like you who helped us bring Pride to Erie. Like the rest of the world, changes had to be made quickly to ensure the health and safety of the community. Although we were able to host the first ever Pride night with the Erie Otters in January 2020, many other events were changed or canceled.

We had big plans for this year to grow Pride Fest and set a new attendance record. Although those plans have been pushed back for now, we were still able to hold a Virtual Pride. We partnered with Erie Playhouse to stream a Virtual Pride event on June 27 that was hosted by our very own Alex Sphon and Tony Gressley, Erie Playhouse Executive Director Kate Neubert Lechner and WJET's Samiar Nefzi. We look forward to building relations with organizations like Erie Playhouse more in upcoming years. We used our Virtual Pride to celebrate the Pride for LGBTQIA+ community and bring awareness to the Black Lives Matter Movement through speakers and Zoom presentations.

Our community support this year was needed more than ever. We were happy to participate in the Drive your Pride Event on June 28th with a parade of Pride decorated vehicles from the Tom Ridge Environmental Center around the peninsula.

Finally, this year we hosted first time events



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aimed at giving back to our community. On October 13th we partnered with Dickey's BBQ, Greater Erie Alliance for Equality, TransFamily of NWPA and the Northwest Alliance for a mobile HIV testing event. In a safe socially distance environment, members of the community were able to get a free HIV test and had the opportunity to register to vote. We hope to make this a growing opportunity for the years to come. On October 29th we again partnered with Greater Erie Alliance for Equality to host a Blanket and Coat Drive. The donations were given to the Ryan White Project, who distributed them to those in need through the Northwest Alliance and Community Health Net.

We are continuing to monitor the pandemic to see if any changes will be needed for the 2021 Pride events. We cannot do this without the continued support of donors and our community partners. We will be holding our main Pride event on Saturday, June 26 and tentatively are scheduling the Pride Picnic for Saturday, August 14. The format for Pride Fest will be determined by health and safety concerns, and the picnic will also be finalized whether or not to proceed as we get closer to the actual date.

For 2020, we wish to thank all of our donors! Rainbow level donors were Erie County Department of Health (ECDH) & NWPA Tobacco Control Program, Violet level donors were Andora's Bubble Tea Shop & Hospice of Metropolitan Erie. Blue level donor was Lake Erie Counseling Associates. Green level donors were AFSCME Local 2666 and Whole Foods Co-op. Orange level donor was Temple Anshe Hased.



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PA Commission on LGBTQ Affairs meeting on Nov 13

The Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs held their quarterly meeting on Friday, November 20. After welcoming remarks from Governor Tom Wolf and Department of Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine, commissioners were sworn in. Pennsylvania was the first state LGBTQ commission in the nation when it was formed in August, 2018.

Co-Vice Chair Ciora Thomas gave a presentation on Transgender Day of Remembrance (November 20), its history and also the need to ban conversion therapy.

Executive Director Rafael Alvarez Febo gave an update on progress over the last year. The commission has gotten new branding and social media. Our commission worked with other affinity commissions of the Commonwealth to issue a joint statement in June regarding racial justice in response to the protests related to the death of George Floyd. The Aging committee had hosted a statewide LGBTQ virtual

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summit related to the Pennsylvania Department of Aging's (PDA's) four year plan, as well as a survey to identify priorities for the plan. For the first time, the PDA has language addressing the specific needs of LGBTQ seniors. This year, the PA Department of Transportation also added nonbinary gender markers on driver licenses.

The Event & Arts/Culture Committee had stressed that Pride events are also an economic engine and how to safely hold events during COVID.

The Health Committee was able to get sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) questions in COVID infection data collection. The Commonwealth and several municipalities also included sexual health guidelines for COVID. Pennsylvania was the first state to include SOGI data collection for COVID.

The Housing and Homelessness Committee continues to work to make housing policy inclusive.

The various committees then met and reported back.

Aging will continue working with the PDA and

will work on how we can identify that area agencies on aging (AAA) are implementing the state plan on aging. They are also looking at getting info onto the PDA's web site related to aging and HIV. The committee is also considering another LGBT aging summit.

Youth and Young Adult is changing its scope to be broader than the education system. We need to elevate policies at the local level, as well as legislative policy. We need to reach youth in care, and address the equity gaps that have been revealed. It is not as easy to access community groups during COVID for youth who don't have internet access.

Health Committee thanks Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine for her leadership. Pennsylvania has an app, COVID Alert PA, that collects SOGI data. We need to promote it to increase its use. The app runs on Apple and Android devices.

Data is about to be released from the 2020 LGBTQIA Health Survey that was conducted earlier this year. There was improved Black and Latinx participation compared to the previous survey.

Legislation and Policy is working on passing

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nondiscrimination legislation and reported that the next session of the state legislature may be less LG-BTQ friendly than hoped.

Mayor's LGBTQ Advisory Council meeting on Nov 5

The Erie Mayor's LGBTQIA+ Advisory Council meet on Thursday November 5 via Zoom. Chief of Staff Renee Lamis gave an update on the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Municipal Equality Index (HRC) for the City of Erie. Our score had not been finalized as of the meeting. There has been some improvement since last year. We are seeking clarification about some topics, and may also consider some programming about the importance of reporting hate crimes. There are also an update on the response rate for the 2020 US Census. The US Supreme Court stopped the census data collection earlier than originally planned.

Emily Crofoot has taken over as lead for the Youth action team and they are basically starting

over. The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) action reported there is an RDP for a DEI consultant for the City of Erie, and also Erie Better Together is looking to hire a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion rep, who will be looking at county level programs, as well as working with the City of Erie DEI consultant. The DEI team participated with the ice cream social with the Erie Police Department and the Cops and Kids event at Second Baptist Church. There were no current updates from the Health Care, Aging, or Education & Policy action teams.

The council thanked Kyle for leading the process to send a letter to Senator Toomey opposing the recent Supreme Court nomination to replace the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg before the results of the November general election were known.

Also shared were reminders about the Virtual E3 Youth Summit that Greater Erie Alliance for Equality was having November 20 & 21, a survey being conducted by Safe Journey to better serve needs of the LGBTQIA+ community in the area of

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domestic violence, a survey being conducted by Erie County to improve COVID-19 messaging to various communities, including the LGBTQIA+ community, and a request from Erie County HIV Task Force for video submissions from organizations for a virtual World AIDS Day presentation.

Central Outreach Wellness Center Erie Office Now Open

Central Outreach Erie is open, taking appointments and welcoming walk-ins. Providing free HIV, STD, and Hep C testing, the medical center specializes in culturally competent healthcare. HIV treatment is available. To get set up with PrEP, simply text us at 412-322-4151. If you need the cure for Hep C, you can find that at Central Outreach also. Other services include hormone replacement therapy, addiction and recovery resources, and homeless outreach.

We give you our best knowing that we have been in similar situations to you, and we understand the unique needs of each patient. We support harm reduction as well as recovery, and no one is judged or shunned by their behaviors. Ultimately, we will advocate like hell for you to ensure you have access to the highest quality of medical care that you deserve. Central Outreach Erie had a grand opening celebration on November 20, 2020 at the new office. While supplies last, if you come to Central Outreach Erie for an STD test, you will receive a free \$20 Giant Eagle Gift Card.

Central Outreach Erie 3104 State Street
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New Survey Available for LGBTQ+ Community

It's time to make your voices heard! How accepted do you feel where you live, work, vacation? How can LGBTQ+ acceptance be improved? Are you struggling? There are links for help.

Erie, PA, - A new survey is available to help make LGBTQ+ voices heard. The LGBTQ+ Satisfaction Survey is free and has no affiliation with any company or organization. The survey asks participants to rate their happiness with where they live,

ABC's of BUILDING BETTER LIVES

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work, and vacation. It asks some questions of a personal nature and delivers links to those who may need assistance with counseling, getting more involved in the community, assistance with family/friends who are having trouble with LGBTQ+ acceptance, finding friends in the community, finding gay counselors, etc. The survey can be taken by the LGBTQ+ communities around the world, so community members are encouraged to share. If the participant chooses, they may say where they live and give recommendations for LGBTQ+ inclusivity.

Anonymity

This survey is 100% anonymous so people are free to tell stories about where they live, work, and feel comfortable spending time and what the community members, government, and entertainment industry can do to improve inclusivity.

Link

<https://form.jotform.com/203114705785151>

Sometimes Friends Are the First to Know

from SafeNet

Are you concerned that a friend is in an abusive relationship? Maybe you are reluctant to hurt

Community News

your friendship by asking questions, even though you have heard yelling, witnessed tears, or noticed unexplained bruises. You don't want to invade their privacy. If your friend needs help, they'll ask for it, right? Maybe. Or maybe they are waiting to be asked, hoping you will be the one to start the difficult conversation.

Abusive relationships are complex, and abusive partners deliberately make it difficult for victims to leave. Your friend could be experiencing trauma. They might feel responsible for making their partner angry. They don't realize they are the victim of abuse. Perhaps they've been isolated from the support of family and friends. Maybe they love their partner and want the abuse to stop, not the relationship.

Here are ways you can help:

- Don't be afraid to reach out. Tell them you are concerned for their safety and want to help.
- Be supportive, available, and patient.
- Acknowledge their feelings and respect their decisions.
- LISTEN.
- Affirm that abuse is not "normal" and it is not their fault.
- Affirm that everyone deserves a healthy, non-violent relationship.
- Download the RUSafe app to get advice and locate agencies nationwide.
- Encourage them to call SafeNet's hotline for free, confidential services. An advocate will help them develop a safety plan.

You can be the difference between the despair they know and the help they need.



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Erie County COVID-19 Messaging Study Seeks Responses from LGBTQIA+ Community, Among Others

The Erie County Department of Health and County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper are working in conjunction with Stevens Strategic Communications, a medium-sized public relations firm headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, to conduct a study to determine how to best communicate COVID-19-related health and safety messages to underserved populations.

In this capacity, we are seeking feedback from the public to ensure voices from all parts of Erie County are heard.

Our goal is to overcome potential communication barriers in an effort to hone COVID-19 messaging to most effectively educate and inform all Erie County residents about news and available resources surrounding the coronavirus while promoting healthy behaviors.

Please note: Demographic information is pertinent to this study to ensure nobody is overlooked, regardless of ethnicity, ability level and potential language barriers; therefore, demographic information will be collected in this survey and used in strict confidence for research purposes only.

For questions, please contact the COVID-19 Research Team at mrodriguez@stevensstrategic.com.

Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ERIECOVID19STUDY>

In Memoriam: Georgia Carpenter

On Monday, October 26, 2020, Georgia Leona Carpenter, mother of three children and grandmother to seven, passed away at age 59. Georgia was born in Olean, NY on September 21, 1961 and lived in Eldred, PA. In her late teens and early 20s she worked with migrant farm workers, and learned to speak Spanish fluently.

Georgia received her Ph.D in Human Development/ Family Studies at Michigan State University in 2017. She also graduated with a Master's in Human Development at Wayne State University, Detroit.

As a licensed Partner & Family Therapist, she provided therapeutic services at Heron Ridge Associates, Arbor Psychology, Great Lakes Psychology,

Community News

Living Balance Center and Connections Therapeutic Services where she was also co-owner. She also had a private practice for several years. She had recently been hired at Lotus Psychology Group prior to becoming ill.

Georgia served as adjunct faculty for several semesters at Eastern Michigan University, and had also been employed at New Directions Behavioral Health, the former Triangle Foundation, and Safe-House Center, Ann Arbor, MI.

Georgia and Helen (Newberger) Streett were domestic partners for over 22 years. They married on July 6, 2013. Georgia is survived by her wife Helen, daughter Juanita Valenciana, sons Noe Jerome Rodriguez, and Joseph Eric Granados Birch, seven grandchildren: Ian, Demetrious, Lucious, Atticus, Tessa, Betsy, and Mae, three brothers: Brian, Rick and Don Carpenter, a step-sister, Susan Jones, her mother Charlotte (Keesler) Carpenter Richardson, step-daughter Sara Streett and dil Laura Streett, step-son Tim Streett and many loving extended fam-

ily members. Georgia was preceded in death by her father, Jerome.

Georgia was well-loved by family, friends, clients and co-workers. She was spontaneous and full of energy, had a quick sense of humor, and was a master of wit. Not one to 'color within the lines', Georgia challenged convention. She saw the lighter and brighter side of most issues, and her authenticity captivated those who came into contact with her. Georgia had a unique ability to transform a history of trauma into empathy, compassion, and empowerment which she selflessly shared with those who chose to be in her life.

Georgia requested that we scatter her ashes in her hometown of Eldred, PA. A Celebration of her Life will also occur in Michigan outdoors at her home at a time and place to be announced in the spring of 2021. Masks will be required for attendance. For details, message Helen Streett on Facebook or email helenstreett@gmail.com.

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are gratefully accepted. Donors may search GoFundMe for “Medical Assistance for Georgia” or by using the following link in the online version of this article

Blanket and Sock Drive for Ryan White Program on Oct 29

from Greater Erie Alliance for Equality

On October 29, 2020 NWPA Pride Alliance and Greater Erie Alliance for Equality GEAE teamed up to host at Blanket and Socks drive. Thanks to the support of the Erie LGBTQIA+ community over 200 blankets and dozens of pairs of socks were donated to the local individuals served by the Ryan White Project. Both organizations hope to continue partnering on Giving Back events into 2021.

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Calendar

For latest updates, see www.eriegaynews.com

Nov 28 (Sat) - TransFamily of NWP (Erie) Transgender Support Group meets (Zoom) 2 PM. Currently meeting via Zoom. Please message via Facebook page for meeting info.

Dec 1 (Tue) - World AIDS Day World AIDS Day is held on the 1st December each year and is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died. World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day, held for the first time in 1988. Browse to <http://www.worldaidsday.org/>.

Dec 6 & 20 (Sun) - Full Spectrum Youth Social & Support Group meets (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 5060 Youngstown Poland Rd, Youngstown, OH 44514) 3 PM - 5 PM. Ages 14 & up, under 14 with guardian consent. Meets in person at Full Spectrum and also streams via Zoom.

Dec 8 (Tue) - Youngstown PFLAG meets virtually (Zoom) 7 PM - 8:30 PM. Youngstown Area PFLAG's support group meeting will gather virtually. Any person who would like to join us can request the zoom link from youngstownareapflag.org Contact: Toni Schildcrout. Email: youngstownareapflag@gmail.com. Browse to <http://www.youngstownpflag.org/>.

Dec 9 (Wed) - Pennsylvania LGBTQ Townhall (Facebook) 6 PM - 7:30 PM. Join Us and speak on issues affecting you and the LGBTQ+ community. Visit facebook.com/PACLGBTQ to join via Facebook Live. Contact: Rafael Alvarez Febo. Email: lgbtqcommission@pa.gov. Browse to <https://www.governor.pa.gov/pennsylvania-commission-lgbtq-affairs/>.

Dec 10 (Thu) - Human Rights Day Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December – the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a milestone document that proclaimed the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being -- regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Browse to <http://www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/>.

Dec 13 & 27 (Sun) - Full Spectrum Gender Support Group meets (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center) 8th: 6-8PM, 22: 3-5PM 18+. Meets in person at Full Spectrum and also streams via Zoom.

Dec 13 & 27 (Sun) - Full Spectrum Sexuality Support Group meets (Full Spectrum Community Outreach

Center) 3-5PM 18+. Meets in person at Full Spectrum and also streams via Zoom.

Dec 14 (Mon) - Erie County Democratic Party LGBTQIA+ Caucus meets (Zoom) 7 PM. General meeting on Zoom. Contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or mmahler@eriedems.com.

Dec 15 (Tue) - Erie County HIV Task Force meets via Zoom 1 PM - 2:30 PM. Zoom Meeting ID: 927 9128 9996. Passcode: 940728

Dec 20 (Sun) - Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus: We Sing Together (YouTube) We've got plans to celebrate! Announcing our next virtual event! We can't wait to perform for you! We need your support, so be there on our YouTube channel. Email: info@buffalogaymenschorus.org. Browse to <http://buffalogaymenschorus.com/>. RSVP/Register/Tickets at <http://ow.ly/z9Qz50BNK22>.

Dec 20 (Sun) - Full Spectrum Friends & Family of Gender-Variant Individuals Support Group meets (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center) 3 PM - 5 PM. Ages 14 & up, under 14 with guardian consent. Meets in person at Full Spectrum and also streams via Zoom.

Dec 22 (Tue) - Erie Gay News folding/distribution work party (Lake Erie Counseling Associates, 301 W 10th St, Erie, PA 16502) 7 PM. Limited number of volunteers welcome. You must wear a mask and practice social distancing.

Dec 26 (Sat) - TransFamily of NWP (Erie) Transgender Support Group meets (Zoom) 2 PM. Currently meeting via Zoom. Please message via Facebook page for meeting info.

Dec 27 (Sun) - Full Spectrum Gender Support Group meets (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 5060 Youngstown Poland Rd, Youngstown, OH 44514) 3 PM - 5 PM. Ages 18+. Meets in person at Full Spectrum and also streams via Zoom Password to join is 4678312. Phone: (234) 254-8924. Email: info@fullspectrumcommunityoutreach.org. Browse to <https://www.fullspectrumcommunityoutreach.org/>.

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